



EXHIBIT 11
DATE 2/8/07
HB 387

February 8, 2007

TO: Chairman Sinrud and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

FROM: Jackie Boyle, AARP Montana

RE: Support of HB 387, Increase CHIP eligibility

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee my name is Jackie Boyle here representing AARP Montana and its 153,000 members. Recently, AARP unveiled *Divided We Fail*, a national effort designed to engage the American people, elected officials and the business community to find broad-based, bi-partisan solutions to the most compelling domestic issues facing the nation – health care and the long-term financial security of Americans.

In the absence of comprehensive national reforms, AARP supports meaningful incremental steps that move the system toward one that in the foreseeable future ensures access to quality care services for people of all ages. One example of incremental reform is the CHIP program to expand coverage for uninsured children. We strongly advocate for the full and continued funding of this program and believe expanding coverage to children with family incomes above 150% of federal poverty is needed.

AARP Montana also recognizes that grandparents are playing an increasing role in family well-being, especially in low-income families. In Montana, over 6000 grandparents are raising their grandchildren full-time. The 2000 Census reported that nationally, 40% of grandparents raising grandchildren live below 150% of poverty. At the AARP's Grandparent Information Center, we hear the most that drugs and alcohol problems are causing parents to be unable to raise their children. Mental illness is also a strong contributor, as well as incarceration, death of a parent, poverty, divorce, child abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, or domestic violence. Military deployment is also a reason that grandparents are called to step in and raise their grandchildren while one or both parents are deployed in military service and unable to care for their children. From studies AARP has conducted, there is a general consensus among these grandparents that "the system" works against them and their grandchildren. Laws, policies or regulations often make it very difficult for grandparents to obtain needed services and financial assistance for their grandchildren.

These grandparents have chosen to take responsibility for raising their grandchildren because they desperately want to keep their families intact. They often live on moderate incomes with other major financial burdens. While many are eligible for publicly funded health care for themselves, their incomes make their grandchildren ineligible. For a family of three with an income of \$34,000 or a family of four with an income of \$40,000 asking for assistance with health care costs of the children is not unreasonable.

We believe federal and state governments have the ultimate responsibility to develop a system that ensures access to needed health care services for all individuals. And particular attention should be given to providing access for individuals living in rural, low-income and minority communities.

Please support increasing the eligibility level for CHIP in Montana and take an important step to expanding health care to all Montanans.



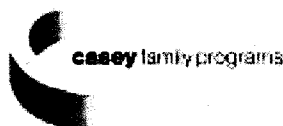
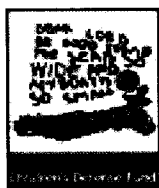
MONTANA



Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

September 2005

The Brookdale Foundation



Across the United States, more than 6 million children are being raised in households headed by grandparents and other relatives; 2.5 million children are in these households without any parents present. As the children's parents struggle with substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, economic hardship, divorce, domestic violence, and other challenges, these caregivers provide a vital safety net to children inside and outside of the foster care system. This fact sheet provides important information and resources for the grandparents and other relatives raising children in your state.

National and State Data*

The Children

- Nationally, 4.5 million children are living in grandparent-headed households (6.3% of all children under age 18). This represents a 30% increase from 1990 to 2000.
- There are another 1.5 million children in the United States who are living in households headed by other relatives (2.1% of all children under 18).
- In Montana, there are 9,526 children living in grandparent-headed households (4.1% of all children in the state). There are another 2,381 children living in households headed by other relatives (1 % of all children in the state). Of the children living in households headed by grandparents or other relatives in Montana, 5,161 are living there without either parent present.

The Grandparents

- Nationally, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grand-children living with them: 29% of these grandparents are African American; 17% are Hispanic/Latino; 2% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; 3% are Asian; and 47% are White. 34% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present. 71% are under the age of 60; 19% live in poverty.
- In Montana, 6,053 grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren living with them [419 in Billings]: .2% of these grandparents are African American; 2% are Hispanic/Latino; 35% are American Indian or Alaskan Native; and 61% are White. 40% of these grandparents live in households without the children's parents present.

Additional Information

- United States Census data on grandparents who are responsible for meeting the basic needs of their grandchildren can also be broken down by county, congressional district, and other categories. Log on to <http://factfinder.census.gov>. Additional data on grandparents and grandchildren are available at www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/grandparents.html.
- Additional national and state data on grandparents raising children is available on AARP's website at www.aarp.org/families/grandparents/.

* These data are taken from the U.S. Census Bureau Table DP-2, Profile Selected Social Characteristics: 2000.

2007 HHS Poverty Guidelines

Persons in Family or Household	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	150%	200%
1	\$10,210	\$15,315	\$20,420
2	13,690	20,535	27,380
3	17,170	25,755	34,340
4	20,650	30,975	41,300
5	24,130	36,195	48,260
6	27,610	41,415	55,220
For each additional person, add	3,480	5,220	6,960

SOURCE: *Federal Register*, Vol. 72, No. 15, January 24, 2007, pp. 3147-3148